

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 084255

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, SY, XF

SUBJECT: SYRIAN AND ISRAELI POW'S

1. UNDER SECRETARY FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS SISCO

RAISED IN VERY LOW KEY THE

TOPIC OF POW'S WITH AMBASSADOR DINITZ APRIL 24. SISCO

ACKNOWLEDGED RECEIPT FROM THE ISRAELIS OF THE ICRC REPORT

ON ISRAELI PRISONERS IN SYRIA AND ASSURED DINITZ THAT WE

WOULD STUDY IT CAREFULLY. SISCO THEN SAID THAT WE HAD

RECEIVED SYRIAN COMPLAINT CONCERNING ISRAELI TREATMENT

OF SYRIAN POW'S, AND THAT THE SYRIANS HAVE ASKED US TO

RAISE THIS WITH THE GOI. SISCO STRESSED THAT HE WAS NOT

ADDRESSING HIMSELF TO THE FACTS OF THE ISSUE BUT MERELY

POINTING OUT THAT THE SYRIANS CLAIM THEIR PRISONERS IN

ISRAEL ARE SUFFERING FROM OVERCROWDED CONDITIONS, LACK OF

EXERCISE AND READING MATERIAL, AND THAT SOME OF THE

INJURED HAVE BEEN MOVED PREMATURELY FROM HOSPITALS TO

PRISON. THE SYRIANS ALSO SAY THEY HAVE HEARD THAT A

HUNGER STRIKE OF THEIR PRISONERS IN ISRAEL TOOK PLACE

RECENTLY- SISCO NOTED THAT ICRC SOURCES HAVE REPORTED

THAT CERTAIN PROBLEMS IN ISRAELI TREATMENT OF SYRIAN

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PRISONERS REMAIN TO BE RESOLVED.

2. DINITZ SAID HE WOULD IMMEDIATELY ASK HIS GOVERNMENT TO LOOK INTO AND CORRECT ANY DISCREPANCIES REVEALED BY ICRC REPORTS OF ISRAELI TREATMENT OF PRISONERS.

DINITZ SAID HE WOULD DO THIS AS A MATTER OF URGENCY, NOT ONLY FOR OBVIOUS HUMANITARIAN REASONS, BUT ALSO TO FORESTALL THE SYRIANS FROM USING THEIR COMPLAINTS AGAINST ISRAEL TO JUSTIFY THEIR OWN FAILURES CONCERNING ISRAELI POW'S. DINITZ STRESSED THAT ISRAEL HAD PROVIDED US WITH THE ICRC REPORT QUIETLY BECAUSE THE GOAL IS TO ALLEVIATE CONDITIONS NOT TO SCORE PUBLICITY POINTS ON THE SYRIANS. KISSINGER

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